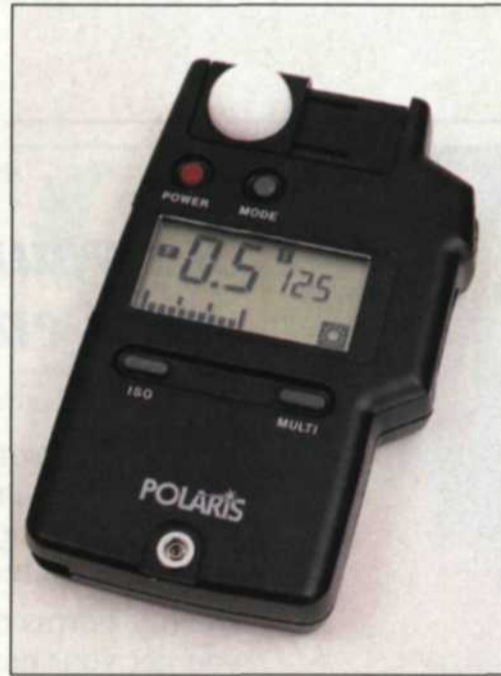


Light Meter Mania

Scott Adams



Sekonic L-408 MultiMaster



Polaris Digital Flash Meter



Wein WP-1000

OVER THE YEARS photographers have come to realize that there are dozens of things that can go wrong during the process of creating an image. With time and experience most problems are easily resolved, but the most unpredictable element is exposure. Film manufacturers go to great lengths to expand exposure latitude with new emulsions, while camera manufacturers refine metering systems to better capture the elusive perfect exposure. One solution has always been to bracket the exposure every scene and cross your fingers that you caught the right exposure. If Murphy's Law is with

you, that will surely be the exposure where your subject blinked. A better solution is to use a separate, hand-held exposure meter backed by a good working knowledge of how to use it.

As the electronic industry envelops photography, exposure meters have expanded from mechanical dial types to include ones with digital readouts. The new breed of exposure meter is practical, easy to use, and more accurate than the meters of the past we have come to know and love.

A word or two about this article...it is not our intent to cover each and every meter available, but rather to give you an

overview of the market and then highlight one or several meters from each of the manufacturers in order to better inform you of the features and functions available.

Sekonic

Sekonic offers a wide range of meters to satisfy both amateur and professional photographers. Six digital and four mechanical meters cover a wide spectrum of lighting situations. One of the latest additions is the **Sekonic L-408 MultiMaster**. This extremely compact water-resistant meter is designed to work in all

weather conditions, offering both reflected and incident metering. The 5° reflected spot meter is selected by sliding a protective door down on the front of the meter. The dome on the incident part of the meter is adjustable in its angle of preview, as it retracts inside the meter allowing for contrast metering. The meter fits comfortably in your hand with the exposure button and function adjustments just under your thumb. Controls for ISO, mode function, power on/off, aperture/shutter priority, and multi-exposure are located on the front of the meter. The mode button allows you to select flash, multi-flash, or ambient light. The ISO values can be selected from ISO 3 to ISO 8000 in 1/2-stop increments. You have the choice of readings in full stop, 1/2 stop, or 1/3-stop increments with a display from f/1 to f/90. The shutter speed display can range from 1 second to 1/8000 second when used as a flash meter, and from 30 minutes to 1/8000 second for ambient light. Both cord and cordless flashes are acceptable with the MultiMaster. The 1.5-volt AA battery is checked each time you turn the unit on, and is displayed in 1/2 increments.

Polaris

The Saunders Group represents a variety of photographic manufacturers providing products for the darkroom and studio, including several types of exposure meters. The **Polaris Digital Flash Meter** is designed to provide all the functions of a professional exposure meter, while still maintaining simplicity of operation. The unit fits easily in either hand with the exposure button on the right side. Four buttons on the front of the unit control power, mode, ISO, and the multi-exposure functions. A battery check comes on when you first apply power to the 1.5-volt AA battery and is displayed in 1/2-stop increment levels. Once the power is on, you can set the ISO from 3-8000 at 1/2-stop increments. The Mode button allows you to select flash, multi-flash, or ambient light. The Multi button is used to calculate multiple flash exposures. Adjustments to the Mode and ISO controls are with "up" and "down" buttons on the right side, just under the exposure button. The exposure data is displayed on a very large liquid crystal panel on the front of the unit. Shutter speeds are displayed in 1/2 stops, and f-stops are displayed as full stops with additional 1/3-stop data below the number. The dome diffuser at the top of the meter can slide to the side, so that you can take a flat or contrast reading.

Wein

The Wein flash meter is also part of the Saunders line of photographic products, and comes in two variations. The **WP-500B** is designed to read incident light from electronic flash and give a direct f-stop readout up to f/22. The film ISO is set from 25 to 1600 with the rotating dial on the front of the unit. A three-position switch allows you to check the 9-volt battery, take a meter reading and reset the unit. The **WP-1000** is similar except that the f-stop range is increased to f/90, and the meter readings are accurate to within

1/2 of an f-stop. The ISO film range has also been increased to ISO 6400.

Minolta

Minolta's newest addition to their full line of exposure meters is the **Flash Meter V**. This sophisticated meter offers all the bells and whistles a professional requires, yet it is simple to use. For most applications, you would just use the buttons on the front in an AUTO mode. As you hold the meter in your hand, you will find an adjustment dial on the right side of the meter, located just under the expo-

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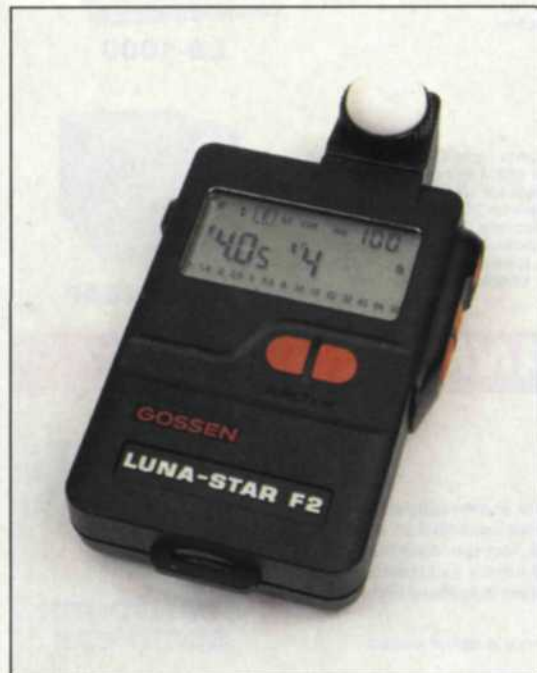
For more information, circle 252



Minolta Flash Meter V



Gossen Color Pro



Gossen Luna-Star F2



Gossen Luna-Pro Digital



Gossen Ultra-Spot 2

sure button. This dial controls all the variables of the other functions on the front of the meter. The power button turns on a 1.5-volt AA battery, which will automatically shut off in one hour if there is no usage. The ISO button will adjust the meter from ISO 3-8000 in 1/2-stop increments. A special instant film button lets you make a different setting for Polaroid instant film, which often has a different sensitivity. There are five additional buttons that are used less often so they are hidden away under a sliding cover. The Mode button selects ambient, flash, multi-flash and the auto function. The auto function is unique in that the meter will automatically read flash or ambient with or without a flash cord. The "M"(memory) and "M-clr" (memory clear) allow you to record up to eight

different measurements. The two most advanced features of the Flash Meter V are the "*" and the "S/A/H" buttons. These two work together to compute average exposure, shadow exposure, highlight exposure, brightness ratio and mixed lighting ratios. In addition, there are five more controls inside the battery compartment that fine-tune the controls on the front of the meter. If you love high technology, you're going to love this meter.

Gossen

If you like German technology, then you may want to look at the very impressive Gossen meter line. Several levels of exposure meters, and one color temperature meter are distributed by the Bogen Photo Corporation. Their three most recent additions in exposure meters include the Luna-Star F2, the Luna-Pro Digital, and the Ultra-Spot 2. The Luna-Pro Digital and Luna-Star F2 are both similar in size, but are configured differently. The function control on the Luna-Pro Digital selects the following modes: aperture, shutter speed, EV values, exposure correction, and film ISO. Each function is adjusted with up and down arrows next to the meter button. The incident dome on the front of the meter slides to the side changing it to a reflected meter. Film ISO readings can be changed from ISO-8000. A 1.5-volt AA battery operates the meter and will turn off after two minutes of non-use.

The Luna-Star F2 rearranges some of the same controls to the side of the unit and adds flash reading capabilities. A swivel head was also added and the power source was changed to a 9-volt battery. Lighting contrast, with the diffusing sphere in place, and scene brightness contrast, without the sphere, can be measured on either meter by holding down the measure button while scanning the scene. The values readout on a bar at the bottom of the display.

The Ultra-Spot 2 is a dedicated reflected spot meter that takes measurements down to 1°. The base of the meter has a hand grip and all the button controls are within the reach of your thumb. Functions are selected with the up and down arrows located to the right and left of the center control panel. A single up/down button in the center adjusts each function. Single and averaged multiple readings are taken with the "+M" and "-M" controls respectively. The top half of the meter contain the data viewer. When you look through the camera-like eyepiece, you will see a 15 degree angle of the scene with a 1 degree spot in the center. Liquid crystal data is incorporated in the area around the out-

For More Information...

Gossen

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Minolta

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Polaris

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Sekonic

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<http://www.sekonic.com>

Wein

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side of the viewing area. This display gives you information about shutter speed, f-stop, average exposure, and the functions available with the unit. The functions include f-stop, shutter speed, film ISO, flash, EV numbers, exposure correction, cine and the Zone System. To take a single reading you press the +M and the results are displayed around the viewing area. Pressing the -M button adds additional readings and averages them in a bar display at the top of the viewer. Up to nine additional readings can be averaged in this way. The Ultra-Spot 2 is powered by a 9-volt battery that turns off 15 seconds after a reading is taken.

The **Gossen Color Pro** measures the color temperature of light and gives a direct readout indicating Kelvin, the mired values and the Kodak compensating filters required. It uses the same meter housing as the Luna-Star F2, only the name and internal components have changed. The function control selects film, color temperature, variable color temperature, light source, flash and lux.

To use the meter, select the film type or desired color temperature with the "Film" or "Vari" functions. Next, select flash or ambient light as the light source, and press the "M" button to take a reading. The display on the front gives you the Kelvin temperature of the film you are using, the Kelvin temperature of the light source, and the filtration needed to match the two.

I was very impressed with the quality of all the meters I reviewed and would be hard pressed to pick the one I would select

for my work. They all have their good points, special applications and price considerations. I only wish this technology had been available when I first started in photography. Then maybe I wouldn't have had to learn so much by my mistakes!

If you want to learn more about any of the meters in this article, contact these companies or jump onto the web and go surfing:



Scott Adams is a freelance journalist/photographer living in the Pacific Northwest.

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